

A  
PRACTICAL TREATISE  
ON  
BRITISH SONG BIRDS;

IN WHICH IS GIVEN  
EVERY INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THEIR  
Natural History, Incubation, &c.

TOGETHER WITH  
THE METHOD OF REARING AND MANAGING BOTH  
OLD AND YOUNG BIRDS.

---

BY JOSEPH NASH.

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Illustrated with Engravings.

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LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, JONES, AND CO.  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

*Sold by Joseph Nash, 39, Great Windmill-Street,  
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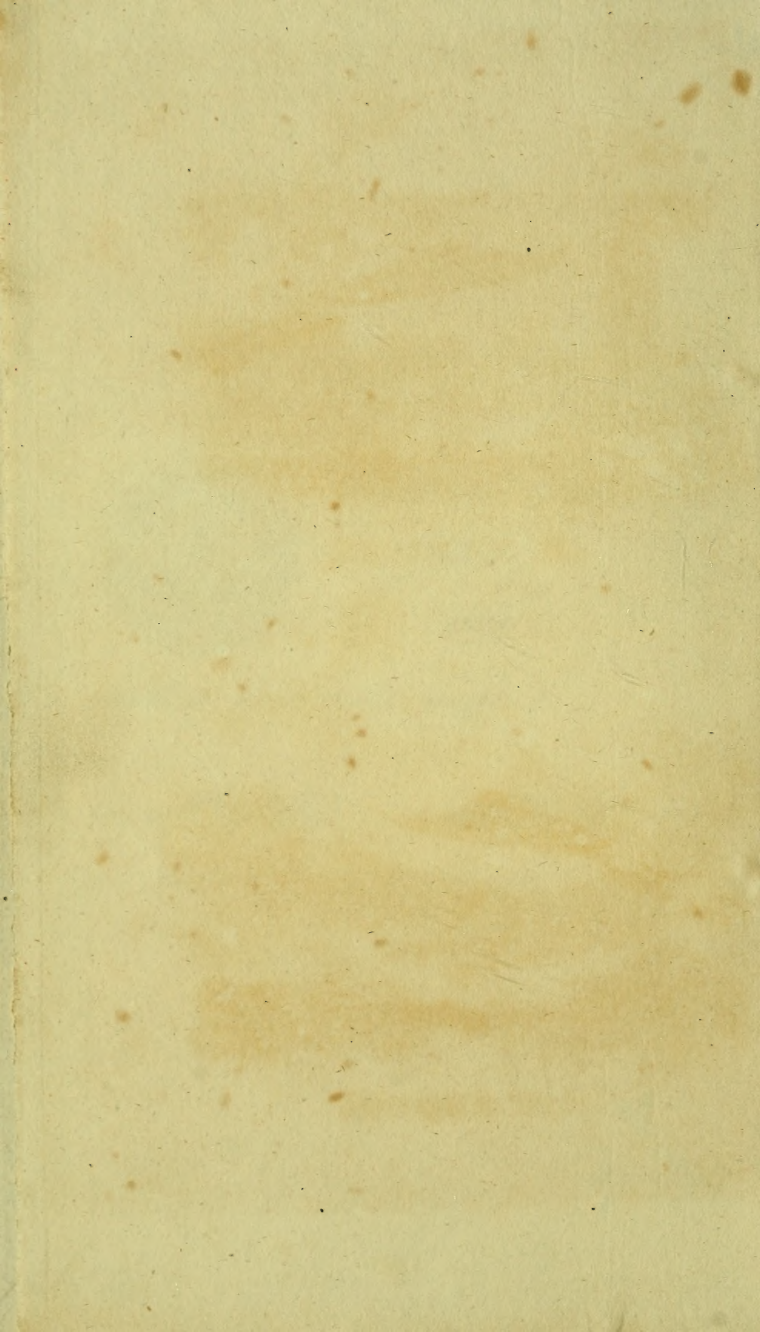
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MEALY COCK.



*Drawn & Engraved by Norman Fiddings*

JONQUE HEN.

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PRACTICAL TREATISE

# BRITISH SONG BIRDS

IN FOURTEEN PARTS

A NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE SINGING OF BIRDS

By J. B. AYER, F.R.S.E., F.R.S., F.R.S.

TOGETHER WITH

THE METHOD OF REARING AND MANAGING BOTH  
OLD AND YOUNG BIRDS.

BY JOSEPH NASH.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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## A D D R E S S .

IN compiling the following pages, which I now offer, for the first time, to the public, I have been principally induced by the want which bird-fanciers, and those who delight in singing birds, have long felt, of a cheap, yet comprehensive treatise on the rearing and management of British Song Birds.

As few bird-fanciers require a work of this kind for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of the mere natural history of

singing-birds, I have touched but lightly on a subject which would be of no further use than to swell out the work, and cause a consequent augmentation of price, the diminution of which has been my most earnest endeavour throughout the whole of this treatise.

Neither have I made any attempt at a scientific arrangement, but have given the description, together with the directions for the rearing and management of each bird, just as I wrote them, beginning with the canary, on which I have been as explicit as possible, concealing nothing that could be in the smallest degree serviceable to those who keep and breed these birds, either for profit or amusement. I have also had drawings made and engraved from four of the most perfect birds I could possibly procure, in order to show the manner of matching them ;



so that the beginner will not be at a loss in that part of the business, which is one of the most difficult things in breeding canaries for show birds. Nothing, indeed, that I considered necessary have I left unsaid, but have given every information which I either possessed myself, or could procure from others. I likewise beg to inform those ladies and gentlemen, who are in the habit of breeding canaries, that I have always a selection of Fancy Birds, bred by the principal bird-fanciers.

In treating on the other song birds, I have given short descriptions of a great number that are but little known; but which having been mentioned by other writers, I thought it would be wrong to pass over unnoticed. On the more known and celebrated warblers, I have, however, been more diffuse, treating on the nightin-

gale, robin, sky lark, &c. at considerable length.

I beg leave to conclude, in the hope that the public will kindly excuse any inaccuracies of style that may occur. I do not profess to offer them the following treatise, as showing either elegance of thought, or purity of diction, but merely as the result of many years' experience, which, from time to time, I have put together at my leisure moments.

JOSEPH NASH.

39, *Great Windmill Street,*  
*Haymarket.*

*May 1, 1824.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

The Canary . . . . .	page 1
The Goldfinch . . . . .	30
The Bullfinch . . . . .	34
The Linnet . . . . .	38
The Aberdevine . . . . .	43
The Redpole . . . . .	45
The Blackbird . . . . .	47
The Thrush . . . . .	52
The Mistle Thrush . . . . .	55
The Brown Starling, or Solitary Thrush . . . . .	57
The Starling . . . . .	59
The Sky Lark . . . . .	62
The Wood Lark . . . . .	71
The Tit Lark . . . . .	76
The Nightingale . . . . .	77
The Redbreast . . . . .	88
The Redstart . . . . .	91
The Black Cap . . . . .	94
The Wren . . . . .	96
The Golden-crested Wren . . . . .	98
The Willow Wren . . . . .	100
The Eggs . . . . .	102



## LIST OF PLATES.

---

*Plate*

1	Mealy Cock and Jonque Hen . . . <i>to face</i>	<i>Title</i>
2	Jonque Cock and Mealy Hen . . . — <i>page</i>	1
3	Bullfinch and Goldfinch . . . —	30
4	Aberdevine and Linnet . . . —	38
5	Blackbird and Starling . . . —	47
6	Thrush and Sky Lark . . . —	52
7	Nightingale and Redbreast . . . —	77
8	Eggs . . . . . —	102





JONQUE COCK.



MEALY HEN.

*Published April 11 1824 by Sherwood Jones & Co.*



A TREATISE  
ON  
BRITISH SINGING BIRDS.

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THE CANARY.

IN beginning this treatise on British Song Birds, I have placed the canary\* the first, for the following reasons : first, because it is more known and more common than any other song bird whatever ; secondly, because its notes are the sweetest and most melodious of all others, the nightingale excepted ; and thirdly, because the breeding it, so as to produce a bird of a certain kind of plumage, which I shall describe hereafter, forms a kind of fancy, and affords a source of profit and amusement to a nu-

\* Although not originally a native of Great Britain, I am sure that the reader will excuse my calling it a British song bird, seeing that it has been naturalized in this country during a period of three hundred years.

merous class of individuals, who have formed themselves into different societies for the purpose of improving the breed, and carrying it to the highest point of perfection.

Originally, the canary is a native of the Canary Islands, from which it takes its name, and from whence also it was imported, it is said, about the fourteenth century. Of its habits in a state of nature, we know but little; this, however, is certain, that it is neither so beautiful in its plumage, nor so melodious in its song, as when domesticated.

In speaking of this bird, Buffon observes, “ that if the nightingale is the chauntress of the woods, the canary is the musician of the chamber. The first owes all to nature; the second derives something from our arts: with less strength of organ, less compass of voice, and less variety of note, the canary bird has a better ear, greater facility of imitation, and more memory: and as the difference of genius, especially among the lower animals, depends in a great measure on the difference that exists among them, with regard to the perfection of their senses, the canary bird, whose organ of hearing is

more attentive and more susceptible of receiving, and retaining, foreign impressions, becomes accordingly more social, tame, and familiar. It is capable of gratitude, and even of attachment; its caresses are endearing, its little humours are innocent, and its anger neither hurts nor offends; its education is easy, we rear it with pleasure, because we are able to instruct it; it leaves the melody of its natural note to listen to the harmony of our voices and instruments; it applauds, it accompanies us, and repays the pleasure it receives with interest. The nightingale, more proud of its talent, seems willing to preserve it in all its purity, at least it appears very little to value ours, and it is with the greatest difficulty it can be taught to repeat any of our airs. The canary can speak and whistle. The nightingale despises our words as well as our songs, and never fails to return to its own wild wood notes; its pipe is a master-piece of nature, which human art can neither alter nor improve. That of the canary is a model of more pliant materials, which we can mould at pleasure. This last, therefore,

contributes in a much greater degree to the comforts of society; it sings at all seasons, it cheers us in the dullest weather, and even adds to our happiness, for it amuses the young, and delights the recluse; it charms the tediousness of the cloister, and exhilarates the soul of the innocent and the captive."

There are two kinds of canaries, one of which is the common, or gay-bird, as it is called; and the other the fancy bird; of which there are two varieties, called jonquils or junks; and meally birds: but of these we shall speak by-and-by under the head of fancy birds, whilst in the mean while we shall treat on

### THE COMMON CANARY.

FIRST, in order to choose a good bird, particular attention ought to be paid when purchasing either cock or hen, that it is lengthy, straight, and taper made, standing upright on its legs; as I have always found these the most spirited and best song birds, dwelling long upon their low notes, and at the same time possessing more power to



raise their voice gradually, till such time as they come to their full tone, which these birds always do with great ease; whereas I have particularly noticed, that a short, thick bodied bird, seldom goes through his song with any spirit; but on the contrary, frequently stops when he has got half way, and then begins again, which takes from his value very much, as a good bird ought to throw out his song at great length, and with ease to himself. With regard to the rearing and management of the common canary, as well as the treatment of its diseases, there is not the least difference between this and the fancy birds; and as to matching them, I would advise every breeder to follow his own fancy. Many people prefer breeding clear birds, which are to be obtained by matching a fine clear jonquil cock with a clear white or meally hen, taking care that neither of them have any black in their feathers: the greatest care must also be taken, that both male and female have been bred from such birds as have also been clear, as canaries are very apt to throw back to the colour of the old birds. Indeed

I have often known every bird bred from a clear pair, to have black feathers in them, owing to the old birds having been bred from such as were not clear. To breed handsome birds, I should recommend a fine junk cock that is clear in feather, and free from green, to be matched with a rich green hen, by which method I have seen produced the finest pied young ones that can possibly be imagined, being remarkably rich in colour. The birds bred in this way are also much stronger than those which are clear in colour, and I have always found them to be the finest songsters.

A pied junk cock with a pied meally hen, will produce young ones which will be very beautifully marked : care, however, must be taken that they have not too much green in them, as otherwise the young will be too dark in colour, and very often quite green, or dark, which does away with their beauty entirely, although such birds generally prove very stout powerful songsters : still, however, we ought to look towards pleasing the eye as well as ear, and endeavour to produce not only a good song bird,

but also one with beautiful plumage; but this I must leave to the fancy of the breeders, as every one thinks *his* fancy the best, and I would wish every one to enjoy their own ideas, as it is merely a matter of choice.

I shall now proceed to the fancy birds; of which, as I have before observed, there are two varieties, called jonquils or junks, and meally birds; the former of which are, such as have the crown and under part of a deep orange colour; whilst the latter have the same part of a pale yellow, or white; and as I am upon this subject, I think I cannot do better than begin my account of the fancy birds, with describing the properties which a "*show bird*," or such as is intended to be shown for the prize, ought to possess.

## ON THE PROPERTIES OF FANCY BIRDS.

THE first property of a fancy bird consists in the cap, which ought to be of a most beautiful orange colour, and possess

the utmost regularity, without any black feathers ; as the smallest speck of black causes the bird to be considered a broken capped bird, in consequence of which it loses the first property as a show bird.

The second property consists in the colour, which ought to be of a fine deep orange, without any tincture of green, and should pervade every part of the body, the wings and tail excepted.

The third property consists in the feathers of the wing and tail being of a deep black all the way up to the quill ; as a single white feather in either wing, or tail, causes the bird to be what is termed a foul bird, and cannot be shown : it being required, that every bird exhibited for the prize, have all the feathers of the wings and tail black ; the number in each wing being eighteen, and in the tail twelve. I have frequently observed, that the best coloured birds have been foul in one or two feathers, which reduces their value ; although they are, in my opinion, birds which might be matched to breed with ; and I have seen as fine a produce from foul birds as from



clean ones, when it has happened that the foul birds have been bred from clean birds : on the contrary ; birds which have been bred from foul ones, however clean they may be themselves, often throw back, and produce foul birds again. On this account, particular attention ought to be paid, as far as regards the matching the fancy birds intended to breed from : first, be thoroughly acquainted with the strain from which the bird, intended to be paired, came ; whether it was produced from a *strong* pair of old ones, by which are meant those birds which have a deal of black in them, for in this case the young ones from such a pair often throw back to the original strength of the old ones, and deceive the breeders who match them. Examine the feathers on the back and breast, and if they be strong, they will show a deal of black in the down, in which case care must be taken that it be not matched with another equally strong, but with one that is of a beautiful soft clean colour.

Care must also be taken that the two

birds are of the same cast of colour, whether strong or soft, for if two red kind of strong birds are put together, they are extremely likely to throw their young ones strong, and very often inclining to a green cast of colour, which must be as much as possible avoided. Having made it my particular study to notice the plan adopted by the principal society breeders in the metropolis, I find that they generally go by the following rules in matching their birds.

First, if they have a fine jonquil cock of a strong red colour, with a deal of black in him, he is paired with a soft coloured meally hen, with as little black in her as possible, except her wings and tail.

Secondly, for a strong meally cock, they choose a fine jonquil hen.

By referring to the plates, the reader will observe that I have had them drawn as they ought to be matched; that is, a strong jonquil cock with a soft meally hen, in the first plate, and a strong meally cock with a fine jonquil hen in the second.

The breeder must be particularly cautious

not to match brother and sister together, as it will be the means of losing their beautiful colours; indeed, relationship of any kind, however distant, ought to be carefully avoided.

### BREEDING, MANAGEMENT, &c.

WHEN you put your birds in the breeding cage, you must provide them with some clean boxes to build in, and some elk's hair, of which they will make their nests: it will also be as well if you put a little hay in the boxes, which will be the means of enticing the birds to take to them the sooner.

When the hen has made her nest, be careful not to disturb it, for it often makes the hen very fretful and careless, so much so, that I have known her to lay her eggs at the bottom of the cage, by which means they are frequently lost; as it is a great chance that a hen so disturbed will take to her nest again. I have always seen that the method adopted by the principal breeders, when the hen has built her nest, is to

leave them to themselves, so that they may not be disturbed.

When the hen sits on her nest all night, which is often the case before she lays, as indeed I have sometimes known her to sit four or five nights before she has deposited her first egg, I would recommend her to be watched off her nest, when the box must be taken down very carefully, and the egg (if she has laid one), lifted out with a tea-spoon, placed in some bran, and covered over; a bad egg, or one made of bone or ivory, ought to be put into the nest for the hen to lay to, for she will be very uneasy if she misses her egg, and I have occasionally remarked them to pull the nest in pieces, and build in another box, in doing which a great deal of time is often lost.

I have always found it the best plan to take the eggs from the hen as soon as they are laid, putting in as many bad ones, or those made of ivory, as you take out good ones, till she has laid her four eggs; when the bad ones must be taken out, and the good ones put in again. Notice the day that the hen is set upon her own eggs, as the



young ones will be hatched in fourteen days from the day she begins setting.

Care must be taken to put some bread, and hard boiled egg, grated very fine, and mixed with a little maw seed into the cage, together with some groundsel, as it will entice the hen to feed her young :—I recommend groundsel which is most gone to seed for the first meat, as the chickweed is not ripe enough at the beginning of the breeding season, and being too green to give them, it is apt to swell them. I have known many fine nests of birds lost, through giving the old birds too much green meat to feed their young with.

The best plan is, to make it a rule to feed those old birds which have young ones twice a day ; first, early in the morning, and then again in the afternoon, giving the hen time enough to feed her young ones before it be too dark. The young ones ought not to be disturbed by looking at them till they are two or three days old, when the hen must be watched off her nest : the young ones must be put up again in the same direction as soon as possible, whilst the hen

is feeding, and before she goes up to her box again, for if she be put off her nest, it is a great chance if she do not take one or two of the young ones out with her, which are often killed by the fall. When the young ones are nearly old enough to leave the nest, you must be very careful not to take the box out of the cage, as the young birds are extremely apt to fly out. I have always found it the best plan to take the nest of young down when they are about a fortnight old ; and to place the box, with the nest and young ones, in the bottom of the cage, putting a fresh box in the same place from whence you took the other ; by doing which the hen will take to it.

It is necessary that the nest should be carefully examined when it is taken out, in order to ascertain whether there be any insects in it, as they are extremely destructive to young birds, and often make the hen very uneasy, and leave her nest ; they are generally seen in the hair of the nest, near the box. The best method, when you find the nest infested with them, is to make a fresh one yourself, placing

it in a clean box, and putting the eggs or young ones, whichever they may happen to be, into it, when it must be put up in the same place, and in the same direction as the box you have removed them from: by adopting this plan, you will find the young birds keep very healthy, and the hen be extremely attentive to her nest.

When the young ones leave the box, I would recommend that they should be put into a small feeding cage, made on purpose, with the wires sufficiently wide for the old ones to get their heads through, in order to feed the young ones, which will be more healthy, and at the same time will not give half the trouble in feeding them as when they were loose in the breeding cage, the old birds not being able to follow them about in the latter case, and having them always together in one place, as if they were in a nest.

When the young birds are able to feed themselves, take them out of the feeding, and put them into a box cage, with a glass slide, in order to prevent them from breaking their feathers, as it takes away

from the beauty of the bird when either the feathers of the wing or tail get broken: be careful also to give them some water inside the box cage, lest they should not readily find their way to that which hangs outside.

When they are first put into the box cage, they must be fed twice a-day with bread and egg, mixed with a little maw seed, put into their pan, giving them but little at a time; as soon, however, as they are able to crack their seeds sufficiently well to support themselves, they need only be fed once a-day with the bread and egg; by way of change, give them occasionally a little bruised rape seed with their bread and egg, as it is extremely good for them, and will keep them in fine condition; I would also recommend that the young birds, when taken from the breeding cage, be kept in another room, quite out of hearing of the old one's call, as the young answering will cause them to fret, and be uneasy to get to them again, and occasion the hen to be very careless of her nest. To a breeder who is unacquainted with the nature of them, the young fancy birds will appear of a strange colour,



being, till they moult, of a very dark cast, with the exception of the cap, which will be of a soft yellow. When, however, they have moulted for the first time, they will throw off their black feathers, and become of a beautiful orange colour, leaving the wings and tail of a fine jet black. When the fancy birds are a year old, and moult a second time, they will lose the greater part of the black in their wings and tails, still retaining the beautiful orange colour in the other parts; nevertheless, this does not interfere with the value of a good bird, as the produce from such will possess the jet black wings and tail as before described.

With regard to their song, that of the fancy birds is much softer and sweeter than that of the common canary. I have had them to sing the notes both of the nightingale and tit lark, which they will readily acquire if placed within hearing of those birds when young; for this reason, I would advise every one who breeds fancy birds, to have a good song-bird for the young ones to learn under, by doing which, he will have the pleasure of possessing beautiful

birds, and good songsters at the same time.

It is also advisable for the breeder to turn up one or two pair every year, of jonque and jonque birds, (by which is meant a jonque cock and jonque hen) in order to maintain the colour: by pursuing this method, he will always have strong birds for matching the next season, and thereby be enabled to keep up the beautiful orange tint, which cannot otherwise be obtained. I have observed, that it is the practice of some of our principal breeders, if they happen to have a jonque cock, bred from a jonque cock and jonque hen, to match him with a jonque hen, which is also bred from a jonque cock and jonque hen; this method, however, I cannot recommend, as the produce seldom makes a good show bird, on account of its being too high bred, by which it has not body feathers enough to produce that thickness of colour, which is possessed by jonque and meally bred birds.

In fancy birds, the cock is easily distinguished from the hen by the superior depth

of colour, not only on his cap, but throughout the whole bird, being of a much stronger orange than the female, and this holds good in regard to foreign as well as English birds, and may be considered as a safe criterion to go by; many breeders indeed can tell the cock from the hen before they have left the nest, by the superior colour which the young male bird shows to the female.

### DISEASES.

IN treating of this part of the management of canary birds, I shall first consider the disorders to which the hen is subject, whilst in the breeding cage.

When the hen has built her nest, she is often observed to appear thick and heavy, in which case she is breeding her egg, and ought to have a little bread and milk, and a few oatmeal grits: I have always found that this has afforded great relief. The grits may be given every day whilst she is laying, as it keeps her in fine condition, though the bread and

milk ought to be sparingly administered, it being apt to make them too weak and relaxed; indeed it ought never to be given unless the hen be seriously unwell.

It occasionally happens also that the hen finds great difficulty in laying her egg, a complaint which is sometimes very fatal; when this occurs, I have found that the least drop of salad oil applied to the parts, has afforded them immediate relief, and enabled them to lay their egg with ease; a warm bath is also a good thing when the hen is in this state. As soon as you observe that she labours under this difficulty, take her gently out of the cage, and hold her body in some warm water for a few minutes; in doing this, however, the greatest care must be taken that you do not break the egg, for in that case you would run great risk of losing the bird. When you have given the hen the warm bath, put her carefully back again into the breeding cage, when she will go on her nest, and lay her egg with the greatest ease, as I have frequently seen.

Canary birds are also subject to the pip, which is a little pimple that comes on the



rump, and which sometimes goes away of itself; if, however, at any time it should prove tedious, it may be opened with the point of a fine needle, the matter squeezed out, and a little loaf sugar, moistened in your mouth, laid on the sore, by which it will soon be healed.

There is another disease to which young birds as well as old ones are subject, and which consists in a swelling of the body: to ascertain whether this be the case, catch the bird, and taking it out of the cage, blow the feathers on one side; when, if the body appears to project beyond the breast-bone, it is a sure sign that the bird is afflicted with this disorder, for which, a little scalded bread and rape seed, prepared as follows, I have found to be an excellent remedy. Take a small piece of stale bread, pour a little boiling water over it, and when it has stood a few minutes, squeeze it quite dry. Next pour some boiling water over a little rape seed, and let it stand covered over for five minutes, when the water must be poured off, and the rape seed rubbed dry in a cloth: when this is done, take a knife, and having

bruised the seed with it, mix it with the bread which you have previously scalded, so as to make a kind of paste.

This disorder generally proceeds from the bird's taking cold, either through being hung in a draught of air, or more frequently from their being allowed too much water to wash in, a circumstance which ought particularly to be guarded against, more especially when the birds are moulting, as at such times they are extremely tender, and apt to take cold, owing partly to the disordered state of their bodies, and partly owing to their being thin of feathers; the more indeed that the birds be kept from the cold air whilst moulting, the better, for I have known many valuable birds lost, by being stopped in their moult, through taking cold.

When a bird begins to drop its feathers, I strongly recommend that the cage be covered over with baize, or flannel, so as to keep it quite warm, by which means the bird will throw off its old plumage, and get its new much quicker and handsomer, than when it is allowed to moult in an open cage; the sooner also that a bird gets through its

moulting, the sooner it will be in song, which ought to be an inducement for the keepers of singing birds to adopt the plan recommended above.

This, however, is only to be done, when you are not provided with a stop cage, which is much preferable to the method above mentioned, as he is more cheerful when not deprived of light, which must unavoidably be the case when the cage is covered over; a stop cage indeed is the best for any small bird to moult in, but more particularly for fancy canaries, as they are so much more valuable than the common birds. I must also advise that they be always kept in a stop cage when not in the breeding cage, as it keeps them so much cleaner, and prevents them from breaking their feathers.

For some time before the birds are turned into the breeding cages, the glass slide ought to be drawn, in order to give them air, beginning by drawing it a little at first, and gradually increasing it, till the birds are completely exposed to the air. By this method they will be rendered more hardy and capable of bearing the cold, than they

would if they were put into the breeding cages after having been shut up close in the stop cages: too much care cannot be taken in regard to this circumstance, for I have frequently known birds (which being taken immediately from a close box cage, and put into a breeding cage, where they have had water given them to wash themselves), to turn very sick; and indeed many to have been lost, through not adopting the plan above mentioned.

### ON THE BREEDING OF GOLD-FINCH MULES.

IN order to possess handsome mule birds, the breeder must provide himself with a young cock goldfinch, and match him with a clear junk hen canary, one that is perfectly free from black: when matched, they ought to be kept together in the same cage through the winter, till April, when the goldfinch must be taken away from the canary, and hung close to her in a separate cage, till the beginning of May, feeding the goldfinch on bruised hemp seed, and a little



of the heads of groundsel, every morning, in order to bring him forward for breeding: the hen, however, must be kept on plain seed only, as when she is fed up, it often happens that she lays her eggs at the bottom of the cage.

About the beginning of May, put them in the breeding cage, and feed them on bread and egg, with a little hemp seed bruised, giving them some nesting to build with; when you find that the canary has finished building, you must be very careful to watch her off the nest, in order to take away the eggs, and substitute false ones, lest the goldfinch break them, which he is very apt to do, the moment he gets sight of them: the eggs must be kept in bran, as I have before mentioned. When the canary has laid her complement of eggs, I should recommend that they be set under another hen canary, and let her bring up the young mules, at the same time keeping the canary that is with the goldfinch sitting on the false eggs for about a week, when they may be taken away, and she will soon begin to

lay again. By sitting on the false eggs for a short time, the canary will be stronger than if she were suffered to begin laying immediately after her own eggs were taken away.

By adopting this plan, the breeder will have many more mules than if he allowed the hen to bring up the young ones herself; if, however, it should happen that he have no canaries under which the eggs can be placed, I should advise that the goldfinch be taken away; when the hen, if she be a kind feeder, will bring up her own young ones extremely well. The breeder should remember that the goldfinch must not be put back to the canary again, till such time as the young ones are old enough to be taken away, that is, when they are able to feed themselves, which is generally at about a month old.

When the young ones are taken away, they must be put into a small cage, and fed with bread and egg, and bruised hemp seed mixed together, and set inside the cage, so that they may have no difficulty to find it,

till they are old enough to seek it outside; the young mules ought to have a head of groundsel given them every day.

The mule bird is a very beautiful songster, and I consider him one of the best we have for the cage, as he sings both Winter and Summer, and nearly the year round.

As mule birds do not breed again, the hens are of no use, unless it be to keep in an aviary, where, by their excessive activity, they keep all the other birds lively and cheerful.

The cock mule may readily be distinguished from the hens, by his cap being of a deeper orange, as are also the pinions of the wings, which will also have the gold mark, the same as the goldfinch.

## ON THE BREEDING OF LINNET MULES.

**MATCH** a cock linnet with a clear hen canary, in the same way as recommended in breeding goldfinch mules, choosing a two-year old linnet, which is more likely to breed than a young one; still, however, the

linnet is not so likely to breed as the goldfinch, nor will the young ones be either so handsome, or so free in song as the mules from the latter bird, though they are excellent birds to bring up under a wood lark, or tit lark, as no bird can imitate the beautiful notes of those songsters so well as the linnet, or linnet mule; the linnet mule is the best of the two, as he sings with more vigour, and dwells longer on the notes of the wood lark than the linnet has power to do; so well indeed have I heard this bird imitate the wood lark, that I am certain no one could have told the difference.

The young mules should be taken from the old birds as soon as they can feed themselves, and hung near a wood lark, taking care that they are out of hearing of the old ones, or they would otherwise be certain to gather some of the linnet's notes, which they would mingle with the song of the wood lark, and thereby take away from their value, as it is a great chance that they would ever leave it off: still it will be superior to the song of the linnet.

Whilst breeding, the old birds must be



fed on bread and egg, mixed with bruised rape seed, which must also be given to the young ones when they are taken from the old birds, till they are about two months old, by which time they get strong enough to crack their seed.

The cock linnet mule, may be distinguished from the hen, by the superior brightness of colour across the head, and by the breadth and clearness of the wings, which, in the cock bird, runs up to the shoulder; his greater length will also serve to distinguish him, though the white on the wing is the safest criterion to go by; the male bird is also more free from spots than the female.

## THE GOLDFINCH,

CALLED also, in some parts of England, the Thistlefinch, on account of its fondness for the seeds of that plant, is equally remarkable for the beauty of its plumage and the docility of its disposition ; the forehead and chin are of a most beautiful scarlet ; the cheeks are white ; the back of the head is of a jet black, which is carried forward like a collar towards the throat ; a streak of the same colour runs from the bill to the eyes ; immediately behind the black on the back of the head, is a patch of white that separates it from the back, which, with the rump, are of a cinnamon colour ; the breast and belly are white ; the tail is black, tipped with white, as are also the wings, with the exception of a bar of yellow, which runs across them, and some spots of white. The female is nothing near so brilliant in its plumage, and the black, instead of being of a beautiful jet, is dull, and inclines rather towards grey.



BULL - FINCH.



*Drawn & Engraved by Newton Fielding.*

GOLD - FINCH.





Goldfinches generally fly in flocks during the Winter season, haunting those fields which abound with thistles, teasel, hemp, dock, &c. on the seeds of which he feeds ; during the Spring they are found in shrubberies and orchards, where the female builds her nest, with moss, dried grass, and roots, lined with wool, hair, or the down of thistles, placing it in general on fruit trees, at a moderate distance from the ground. The goldfinch begins to build in April, when the fruit trees are in blossom.

In their nature these birds are extremely gentle and mild, and are very easily tamed, seeming to regret the loss of liberty much less than most others, as the old birds will fall to their food almost immediately after they are taken ; they are also remarkably docile, and may be taught a number of tricks, such as to draw up a little bucket, containing their seed or water, to fire a cannon, turn a wheel, &c. &c.

The young birds ought not to be taken too soon, that is, not before they are well feathered, as they are less apt to be sullen than most other birds when taken

too old. Their food should be composed of white bread, soaked in water, and then strained and boiled with a little milk, till it be as thick as hasty pudding, adding to it a little flour of canary seed: with this paste they must be fed every two hours, or oftener, from sun rising to sun setting, giving them two or three small pieces, about the size of a pea, at a time, and taking care that their food be fresh every day. When you have fed them about a month on this kind of food, begin to give a little canary seed with it, increasing it by degrees, till you have entirely weaned them from the soft meat; they will also eat hemp seed, though I never found it to agree so well with them as the canary seed.

The cock goldfinch, when brought up from the nest, will couple with the hen canary, producing mule birds, as has been already mentioned.

Goldfinches will readily take the song of any bird that they are brought up under, and may also be taught to speak, and to whistle tunes.

For the treatment of their disorders,

which are the same as those of the canary, see the description of that bird. When troubled with a scouring, the best remedy is a piece of chalk stuck between the wires of the cage for him to peck at, or crumbled among the seed : should he seem to droop, a little saffron in his water, or some thistle seeds, of which he is excessively fond, will revive him.

Goldfinches are taken in considerable numbers at any season of the year, with lime twigs or clap nets, though those caught at Michaelmas are reckoned the best ; when first taken, give them hemp seed, mixed with some thistle seed, if you can get it, till such time as they become used to the canary seed.

## THE BULLFINCH,

Also called in different parts of England, the Alp, Nope, or Thick-bill, is a well known bird, being found in almost every part of this island, though not so plentifully as most other singing birds, a circumstance, perhaps, owing to the continual warfare which is carried on against them, on account of the injury they do in orchards and gardens during the Spring, by devouring the flower-buds of fruit trees, particularly those of the peach, pear, and apple. Bewick, however, notwithstanding the above fact is well known, says in his description of this bird, that, “in the Spring it frequents gardens, where it is usefully busy in destroying the worms which are lodged in the young tender buds.” The bullfinch also feeds on insects, berries, and seeds of various kinds, such as rape, canary, hemp, &c.



The form of this bird is remarkably heavy, with a large head, and a strong, thick, short, and hooked bill, on which account, as well as the beauty of its plumage, and the facility with which it may be taught to pronounce different words, it has obtained the appellation of the English parrot.

The top of the head, with a circle round the bill, the tail, and the wings, are of a deep glossy black, the latter having a bar of white across them; the back is of an ash colour, inclining to that of a dove, and the breast and belly are red; in the female, however, the colours, though arranged in exactly the same manner, are not near so bright, the belly and breast being paler, and more brown than in the male; in both, the bills are blackish, and the legs of a deep brown.

Bewick says, "that the bullfinch, when confined, sometimes changes its plumage and becomes wholly black, especially when fed with hemp seed, and there have been instances of bullfinches in a state of nature, which were entirely white."

The hen builds generally in those woods which abound with sloe and crab-apple trees, where she forms her nest, in somewhat a careless manner, of sticks, small roots, and moss, lining it with the finest fibres of roots; in this nest she deposits four or five eggs, of a pale blue-green, marked with dark purple blotches and small red spots. They are seldom hatched before the latter end of May or the beginning of June.

When bullfinches are very young, it is extremely difficult to distinguish the cock from the hen; the most certain method is to pull a few feathers from the breast when they are about three weeks old, and in ten or twelve days after, they will begin to grow again; those of the cock birds coming of a bright red, while those of the hens will be of a pale brown colour.

These birds ought not to be taken too young, or before they are well feathered, which will be when twelve or fourteen days old; they must be kept warm and clean, feeding them every two hours, from morning till night, on a kind of paste made as follows:

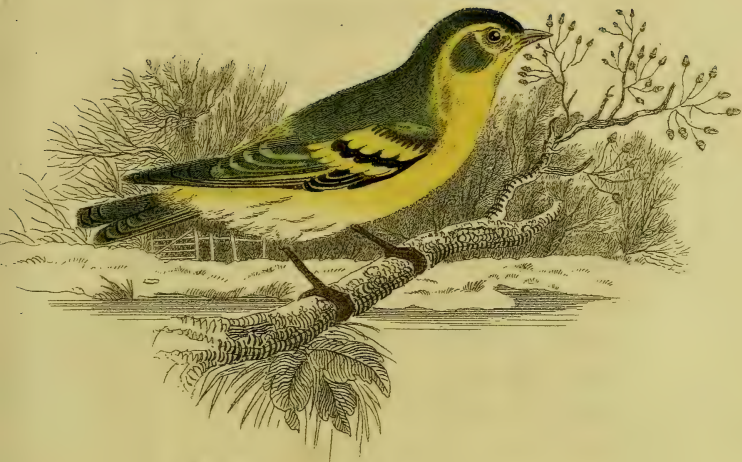
Take a certain quantity of rape seed, which has been soaked eight or ten hours in clean water, and let it be well scalded, strained, and bruised ; mix with it an equal quantity of white bread, boiled with a little milk to a thick consistency : this paste should be made every day, as it will get sour if kept longer. When they are able to feed themselves, give them rape and canary seed, but more of the former than the latter. If at any time you find them out of order, put a blade of saffron in their water, or try them occasionally with the wood lark's meat.

Their disorders, and the treatment of them, are the same as those of the canary, which see.

## THE LINNET.

THIS bird, which is the most common, and at the same time one of the best of our native songsters, is in its plumage far from being either gay or elegant; the top of the head, neck, back, and tail, being of a dark reddish brown, and the under parts of a reddish dirty white; the breast is rather deeper coloured than the rest; the sides are marked with brown streaks; and the wings, which are the same colour as the back, have a bar of white across them: the male may easily be distinguished from the female, either in old or young birds, by the greater depth and brilliancy of his colour, and by the white on the wings being in smaller quantity, and more dingy.

The linnnet is generally met with on moory grounds, where it builds its nest, on either a furze bush or a thorn, making the outside of bent grass, dry grass, roots, and moss closely woven together; the lining is



ABERDEVINE.



LINNET.





composed of hair, wool, and the downy parts of various plants: the female lays four or five white eggs, which have a bluish tinge, and are spotted with brown at the larger end; these are hatched about the end of April or the beginning of May, and the hen has usually four broods in the year.

These birds are frequently found in flocks, especially during the Winter season, at which time they feed on various kinds of seeds. Bewick says, that the linnet derives its name from its partiality to linseed.

The linnet has four or five young ones at a time, which may be taken at ten days old, or even sooner, as they will learn the song of another bird the better for being taken young: feed them every two hours, from six in the morning till six or seven at night, with the same paste as that recommended for the bullfinch; and as soon as they are able to feed themselves, set some scalded rape seed in their cages, in order to wean them from the soft food. It will, however, be a month or six weeks before they are sufficiently strong to crack their seeds, and live entirely on hard meat; in the mean while

ing upon when taken, with a little bruised hemp seed: feed them in this way for a few days; set them in a place where they will not be disturbed, and they will soon grow tame, when you may cage them in back cages, or any other not too big, giving them rape and canary seed, which agrees better with them than any other.

## THE ABERDEVINE, OR SISKIN.

THIS bird bears so strong a resemblance to the canary, that it might readily be mistaken for it: the plumage of the cock is generally of a dusky greenish cast, with a bright yellow breast, and a yellow bar across the wings, like the goldfinch; the saddle is of a deep orange, and the cap is of a beautiful jet black: the hen is known by not having the black cap, and by its plumage being altogether less brilliant.

The aberdevine is not known to breed in England, as it visits us only during the Winter season, at which time it is found among the alder trèes, near rivers, though seldom in any numbers. It is a lively little bird, and though no great songster, is often kept with other birds, as he sings his little jabbering notes from morning till night, and thereby induces the other birds to begin.

The aberdevine is the only bird of which the cock and hen will pair with the hen and cock of the canary; a male aberdevine, matched with a female canary, or a female aberdevine matched with a male canary, both produce mules equally well.

The aberdevine mule sings a beautiful song, which is very musical, though rather low. Aberdevines, and aberdevine mules, are reared and managed exactly the same as the canary.



## THE REDPOLE,

CALLED also the Lesser Redpole, and Lesser Red-headed Linnet, in order to distinguish it from the greater red-headed linnet, is somewhat smaller than the common linnet, which they strongly resemble in their habits and disposition: they usually breed in the northern parts of England, where they frequently build their nest in whin-bush, forming the outside of dry grass, roots, fibres, &c. and lining it with wool, hair, feathers, or willow down. In this warm receptacle the female deposits four or five eggs of a pale bluish-green, thickly spotted at the large end with purple specks. Bewick observes, that "in Winter they mix with other birds, and migrate in flocks to more southern countries; they feed on small seeds of various kinds, especially those of the alder, of which they are extremely fond; they hang upon the branches like the titmouse, with their backs downwards, whilst feeding, and in

this situation may easily be caught with lime twigs."

The plumage of the back of the head, the neck, back, wings, and tail, are of a reddish-brown colour; the forehead, chin, and breast are of a bright crimson, and the belly of a dusky white; the plumage of the female is much the same, but fainter, and in both sexes are two bars of white which run across the wings.

This bird is reared and managed exactly in the same manner as the linnet.





STARLING.



*Drawn & Engraved by Jordon Fielding.*

BLACKBIRD.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

FEW birds are better known, or more widely dispersed through Great Britain, than the blackbird, which though of a shy and solitary disposition, is generally found in the vicinity of our residences, frequenting hedge-rows, orchards, and the outskirts of gardens, where it feeds on worms, insects, fruit, seeds, berries, and snails, breaking the shells of the latter against a stone to get at the contents, for which purpose it has usually some favorite spot.

The plumage of the male is of a jet black, with the bill, and circle round the eye, yellow; the female, which is a trifling degree larger, is of a dusky brown colour, with the bill, legs, and feet also of a dusky hue. During the first year, the plumage of the young cocks is so exactly like that of the hen, that it is difficult to distinguish the male from the female; those birds, however,



which have the blackest plumage, the largest and most sprightly eye, and are the most taper towards the tail, generally prove to be cocks.

The blackbird is one of the most early breeders, sometimes hatching its brood as early as the first or second week in March: its nest is usually found in a holly bush, or some other evergreen, near the ground, and is composed of fibres and moss, the inside being plastered with clay, and lined with moss and other soft substances: all these are worked in so compact a manner, as sometimes to render the nest water tight, through which circumstance it happens, that the young ones are occasionally destroyed during a wet season; the eggs, which are from four to five in number, are of a pale bluish-green colour, marked with dusky spots.

Next to the mistle thrush, this is the largest of our native song-birds, like which, he is one of the earliest to welcome with his delightful notes the rising year, and in melody and sweetness is surpassed by few; in the compass of his song he is very great,

frequently running from a high note, down to a soft deep-toned warble. During the period of incubation, the male, perching on the top of some neighbouring tree, pours forth its delightful melody, and, as the poet expresses it, “mellows its pipe, and softens every note.”

In confinement, it sings and whistles delightfully during the Spring and Summer, for four or five months in succession, and may easily be taught to whistle a tune; the young birds should be taken from the nest when about ten or twelve days old, and regularly fed every two hours, from four or five in the morning till about six at night, with sheep's heart, or any other lean meat, mixed with bread, and moistened with water: when full grown, any kind of fresh meat, either cooked or raw, will do to feed them on. Particular care must be taken to keep the nest clean, for if it is suffered to become foul, the young brood are apt to sicken, and sometimes die: for this reason, as soon as they are able to leave the nest, they ought to be put into a cage, with some clean straw, till they are able to feed them-

selves, when they must be placed in separate cages.

Though of robust habit, the blackbird is subject to many diseases, which, without due attention, often prove fatal, particularly the cramp; as soon as the bird is observed to be labouring under this complaint, he should be taken out of the cage, and his feet held in warm water, for five or six minutes, after which they should be carefully dried, and the bird returned to his cage, with some clean straw at the bottom, and be kept moderately warm. Blackbirds are also subject to fits: when a bird is afflicted this way, he should be taken out of his cage as soon as attacked, and dipped two or three times in cold water; after which, as soon as he appears to recover, he must be returned to his cage, and kept tolerably warm, by being placed near the fire, giving him a meal-worm or two, or a common house spider, once or twice a day; a garden snail may also be given him now and then, particularly when he seems to shun his food.

He should be plentifully supplied with water, as he is very fond of washing him-

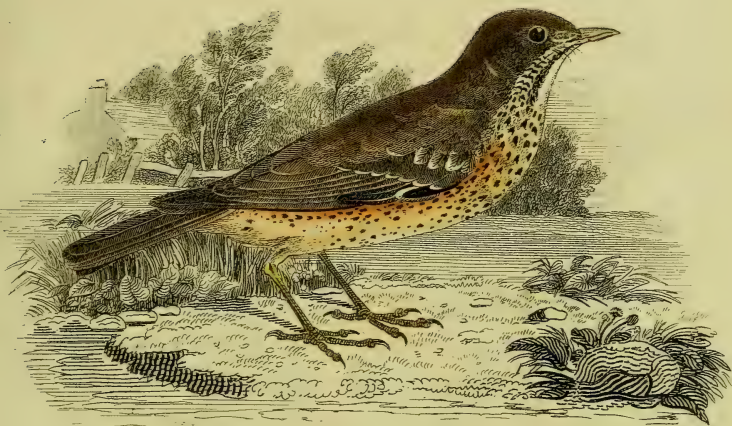
self; and at all times great care should be taken that its food and water be perfectly fresh and good, and that the cage be not suffered to get foul, for many valuable birds are often entirely lost through inattention to these particulars.

## THE THRUSH.

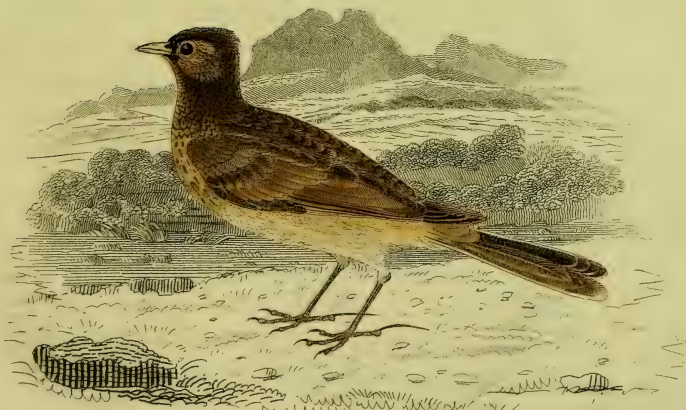
THE Thrush is rather less than the black-bird; its plumage is of a deep olive colour on the head, neck, back, wings, and tail; and its throat, breast, and belly, are of a yellowish white, marked with a number of dusky spots: its legs are yellow.

The male and female of this bird are so much alike in colour, that it is extremely difficult to know the cock from the hen, unless it be by the superior brilliancy of his colours. In young thrushes I would always choose the sleekest and brightest bird. When they begin to feed themselves, both cocks and hens will record; in doing which, the cock will get upon his perch, and sing his notes low for some time; the hen will also attempt to sing, but will only do it by jerks: at the latter end of Summer, when their moulting is over, the cocks will break out strong in song, and sing in Winter as well as Summer.





THRUSH.



*Drawn & Engraved by Newton Fielding.*

SKY-LARK.



The female breeds very early in the season, almost as soon as the blackbird, and has young ones by the end of March, or beginning of April. It builds in woods or orchards, and sometimes in thickset hedges, near the ground. The outside of the nest consists of fine soft green moss, interwoven with dead grass, hay, &c. and the inside is very curiously plastered with cow dung. In this she differs from the blackbird, who always plasters her nest with clay, and puts a soft lining in it, which the thrush does not, but lays her eggs on the loose plaster, five or six in number, of a pale greenish blue, spotted with a few specks of black at the larger end. The young birds may be taken when twelve or fourteen days old, and if the weather be very mild, rather sooner: they are reared in the same way as the blackbird, feeding them every two hours with a paste made of raw lean meat, minced very fine, and bread and hemp seed bruised, the whole mixed together, and moistened with a little water. Every feeding time the nest should be cleansed from dirt, and when it is become extremely foul, they must be taken

out, and put in clean straw, till they are well feathered, when they should be removed to a large cage, having two or three perches in it, with dry moss or straw at the bottom. Full grown birds may be fed with any kind of butcher's meat, either boiled, raw, or roasted ; or they may, by degrees, be entirely weaned from flesh, and fed on nothing but bread and hemp seed ; I do not, however, approve of this kind of nourishment, for I consider a mixture of bread and meat as the best. Give them likewise some clean water twice a week to wash in.

The diseases and methods of cure are the same as those of the blackbird and starling.

## THE MISTLE THRUSH.

THIS, and the following bird, are so very rarely kept in cages, on account of the difficulty with which they are procured, that I should have passed them over, had they not been noticed in other treatises on singing birds.

The mistle thrush in size exceeds all other European songsters, being in length nearly twelve inches; in its plumage and habits it bears a strong resemblance to the common thrush, than which, however, it is more hardy and courageous, as it will singly attack the jay, magpie, or sparrowhawk. Bewick says, that "this species begins to sing early, often on the turn of the year in blowing showery weather, whence in some places it is called the storm-cock." The food of the mistle thrush consists chiefly of wild berries, particularly those of the mountain-ash and the mistletoe, and its name is said to have been given it



through its fondness for the latter shrub. The female generally builds her nest in an ash tree, at some distance from the ground, forming the outside of moss, grass, the stalks of dried plants, plastered over with a layer of clay, on which a lining of soft dry grass is neatly platted: she lays four eggs, of a dusky flesh colour, marked with large spots of purple, and the young ones may be taken when about twelve days old. The mistle thrush has often two broods in the year. The rearing and management of the young, and the treatment of their diseases, are exactly the same as in the common thrush.

## THE BROWN STARLING, OR SOLITARY THRUSH.

THE Brown Starling is extremely rare in Great Britain, though, according to Latham, "this bird is frequent in France, Italy, the Isles of the Mediterranean, and the Archipelago, where it is not only esteemed for its song, but held in veneration by most people, who think it sacrilege to take the nest, or kill the bird."

Its haunts are in lonely, mountainous, and rocky places, where it is always seen alone, except during the breeding season, when it feeds like the rest of its species on insects and berries. In its size it is nearly the same as the thrush, though its form is more slender, bearing a resemblance both to the thrush and the starling, between which it seems to form the connecting link; the upper part of its plumage and belly are of a dusky brown, and its throat and breast of a dingy white. The female builds in the

clefts of rocks, or in the bottom of bushes, and occasionally, like the starling, in ruined edifices, laying from four to six eggs, early in the season.

These birds are also managed exactly like the thrush.

## THE STARLING

Is rather less than the blackbird, being in length only nine inches; its plumage is dark, glossed with green, blue, purple, and copper colours, with a mark of pale yellow at the end of every feather, which gives the bird a beautiful spotted appearance; the bill is yellow, and the legs are of a reddish brown.

When young, the cock may be distinguished from the hen, by a black streak under the tongue, which the hen has not, and which may readily be seen on opening the bird's bill; the first time, however, that he moults his first feathers, he loses this mark, and can then only be distinguished from the hen, by the superior glossiness and brilliancy of its plumage.

These birds are gregarious, and in the Winter season assemble in vast flocks, associating not only with those of their own species, but also with fieldfares, redwings,

and even crows, jackdaws, and pigeons; feeding on insects, worms, grains, seeds, and berries. The female builds in old walls, towers, ruined edifices, trees, and sometimes in cliffs that overhang the sea, forming her nest of dried grass, lined with a few feathers. She lays four or five eggs, which are of a pale bluish green. The young birds are generally hatched about the end of May, and may be taken when about ten days old.

In rearing, they require the same attention and treatment as the blackbird, feeding them every two hours on the same kind of food, giving them but little at each meal. Every time they are fed, or taken in the hand, repeat the words you wish them to learn. The practice of slitting their tongues "to make them speak the plainer," is a custom as absurd as it is cruel, and of no service whatever.

When they can feed themselves, put them into a large cage, with a little straw or moss at the bottom, giving them occasionally some clean water to wash themselves in, a thing which they are very fond of doing, and



which is highly conducive to their health. Their disorders are the same, and are treated exactly in the same way as recommended in the description of the blackbird, thrush, &c.

## THE SKY LARK.

AMONG the variety of song birds that ornament our groves and fields, few are in more general estimation than the sky lark: it is the first to greet the rising sun, and is often heard early in the morning, long before there is sufficient light to enable the spectator to see it in its soaring flight. This circumstance, combined with the extraordinary melody and sweetness of its notes, have rendered the sky lark an universal favourite, many preferring it to every other bird, not excepting even the nightingale and canary.

This bird in its form is long and slender, with rather a long tail; its plumage is brown above, and white underneath, and the feathers on the top of the head being rather long, form a kind of crest or projection on the back of the head.

Bewick observes of the lark tribe in general, that "from the peculiar construc-

tion of the hinder claws, which are very long and straight, larks generally rest upon the ground; those which frequent trees perch only on the larger branches. They all build their nests on the ground, which exposes them to the depredations of the smaller kinds of voracious animals, such as the weazle, stoat, &c. which destroy great numbers. The cuckoo, likewise, making no nest of its own, frequently substitutes its eggs in the place of theirs.

The female makes an artless nest, composed of dry grass and roots, and generally places it under the shelter of a clod of earth; her eggs, four or five in number, are of a purplish brown colour, and marked with a number of spots, and streaks of a darker tint: the hen sits fifteen days, and has usually two broods in a year.

Larks begin to sing very early in Spring, and are seen (particularly during the season of incubation), rising almost perpendicularly to a vast height, till they are no longer visible, warbling the most melodious strains, which may be heard long after the bird is out of sight; rapid execution, sprightliness,

and extraordinary compass are the grand qualifications of the sky lark's song.

Sky larks are remarkably healthy birds, being but seldom troubled with diseases, and they have been known to live upwards of fifteen years in a state of confinement. These birds will sing eight, or even nine months in a year. As they are very apt whilst young to catch the notes of other birds, whether good or bad, they ought either to be kept alone, or within hearing of some good song lark, till their notes are well settled.

When very young, it is extremely difficult to distinguish the cock from the hen. Many pretend that the setting up of the feathers on the head, the length of the heel claw, or two white feathers in the tail, are sure signs of a cock bird; in this, however, there is no certainty. A surer way is to choose the longest-bodied bird: when the cock is about a month old, he begins to record his notes very distinctly, like an old bird, though lower, and with a more inward kind of warble, by which he may readily, and with certitude, be distinguished from the hen. In

full grown birds, the brightest and deepest coloured is the male, which is also of a brighter and clearer white upon the belly.

Young sky larks which have left the nest but a few days, and are unable to fly, called by bird-fanciers "pushers," may easily be taken, by watching when the old birds are feeding them, which can be done by keeping under cover of a hedge, or by lying down in the grass, that you may not be seen by them. You will observe the cock and hen bringing food in their bills, with which they hover over a certain spot, and then drop down suddenly; take notice of the exact place where they alight, and run in upon them as fast as possible, when you cannot fail of taking some of the young birds: if you do not find any at the place you expected, you must look narrowly about, as they are apt to run into some hole or tuft of grass, where they will lie quiet till you are gone. Should you not succeed the first time, conceal yourself somewhere near the same place, and wait till you see the old ones bringing food again, when you must remark whether they bring it all to one



spot, or to two or three different places; in which case it is a proof that the young ones are dispersed: in a short time, however, the old birds will get them together again, and you can then make a second attempt.

The sky larks most in esteem are pushers, and those which have been taken from the nest; after these, the birds called branchers, a term given to those larks which have never moulted, and which are very little inferior to the former: if, however, they have once moulted, or even if they be taken whilst in moult, they seldom prove good for any thing.

Branchers are taken in June and July, by means of a hawk, and a net about eleven or twelve yards long, by three or four broad, having a strong cord passed through the upper side. To manage this business properly, you will require the assistance of a second person, to carry the farthest end of the cord, whilst you bear the nearest end yourself with your right hand, and carry the hawk with your left. Having observed the place where the larks lie, advance slowly

towards them, holding the hawk up in such a manner, that he may be obliged to hover with his wings, in order to steady himself, when the sight of him so terrifies the birds, that they will lie close, and enable you to draw the net over them with the greatest ease.

When you have taken them, you must put them in a cage, with a little red sand in the bottom of it, feeding them on bread, egg, and bruised hemp seed.

Sky larks are also taken with clap nets, trammel nets, nooses, and by doring with a glass.

## ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE YOUNG BIRDS.

These birds ought to be taken when about ten days old, as you run great risk of losing them if you defer it beyond that period ; indeed, they are sometimes known to leave the nest when only seven or eight days old, especially when they have been disturbed, or in rainy weather ; though one

would think that the nest was the fittest place for them in wet seasons. I have, however, observed, that young birds obtain more nourishment, and acquire their feathers sooner in wet than in dry weather ; nor is it to be wondered at, seeing that worms come to the surface of the earth, chiefly during rain, and that the insect, obliged to take shelter under the leaves of plants, are more easily caught by the old birds, than when the weather allows them to be upon the wing.

When you have taken a nest of young ones, put them into a little basket, with some short clean hay, and cover them over with a piece of muslin, crape, or gauze, to prevent their scrambling out ; feed them every two hours from morning till night, with a paste made of white bread and milk, boiled thick, and mixed with rape seed, which has been soaked, boiled, and bruised : three or four pieces about the size of a pea, may be given every time to each bird, on the end of a stick ; some, instead of this paste, feed them on sheep's heart, minced very fine, or any other lean meat.

In a week's time you may put them into a large cage, with some hay cut rather short, or coarse bran at the bottom, turning or shifting it every day, till they are able to feed themselves, which they will do in three weeks or a month, when they may be put into a regular lark cage, giving them a fresh turf once or twice a week, with some fine dry gravel sifted at the bottom of the cage. Remember, the gravel ought to be changed every two or three days, in order that it may not clog the feet. When they are able to feed themselves, you must give them bread and egg, mixed with hemp seed, which ought to be bruised for a week or two at the first, till they are strong enough to crack it themselves; a little butcher's meat, free from fat, and cut small, may also be given occasionally, by way of change: after they have moulted, you may give them bread and egg, with whole hemp seed, every other day, and a fresh turf every week, by which management, as they are very hardy birds, you may preserve them a number of years.

The sky lark is seldom affected with any disorder, though he is sometimes apt to

void loose; when this is the case, some old cheese grated among his food, three or four wood lice every day, or a few spiders, with a little saffron or liquorice in his water, is the best thing I can recommend.



## THE WOOD LARK.

THIS bird bears so strong a resemblance to the sky lark in its plumage, that it might readily be mistaken for the same bird, did not its form, which is shorter and thicker in its proportions, with a shorter tail, sufficiently distinguish it: in old birds, the cock may be known from the hen by the superior depth and brightness of its colours, the greater length and size of his body, and more particularly by his song, the hen singing but very little; he may also be known by the stateliness of his walk, the length of his heel, the largeness of his wing, and by his setting up the feathers on the top of his head, which is flatter than that of the female. When in the nest, it is much more difficult to distinguish one from the other, though the highest coloured and biggest bird generally proves a cock; this, however, is not of such consequence, as but

few are reared from the nest, owing to the extreme delicacy of their constitution.

The wood lark is an early breeder ; the young being often able to fly before the end of March ; the female builds on the ground, at the foot of a bush or hedge, or in places where the grass is long and dry, choosing, like the sky lark, the shelter of a turf: the nest is composed of withered grass, fibrous roots, with a few hairs, or a little wool, by way of lining, the whole being but a shallow and indifferent structure.

### MANAGEMENT OF THE YOUNG BIRDS.

The wood lark being a very delicate bird, the young ones ought not to be taken till they are well fledged, as they are subject to the croop and scouring when they are young: put them in a small wicker basket, with a little clean soft hay, and cover them over to keep them warm, feeding them every two hours with sheep's heart, or any other lean meat; hard boiled egg, a little bread, and some bruised hemp

seed, then chopped as fine as possible, and mixed into a kind of paste with clean water; five or six small pieces, about the size of a pea, will be sufficient to give them at a time, as you must be careful not to overload their stomachs: also take care that their meat be fresh every day.

Wood larks are taken at three different seasons of the year, the first period is in June and July for branchers, which are caught with a net and hawk, in the same manner as sky larks; at this time they are generally to be found about gravel-pits, upon heaths and commons, and in pasture fields.

The next season is Michaelmas, when great numbers are taken with clap nets, and are reckoned much better than those birds which are caught at the other seasons; because, by being kept through the Winter, they are rendered more tame, and will sing much longer, very often eight or nine months in the year. Wood larks at this season usually fly very high, for which reason the highest ground is generally chosen to lay the nets upon, either in a

cart-way, or where the earth has been lately turned up. The last season for taking wood larks is in January, when they are also caught with a clap net. The birds taken at this time are stouter, and will sing sooner and louder than those caught in September, though nothing near so long in the year.

The birds taken at the different seasons, must all be fed alike, with hemp seed bruised, and mixed with bread and egg chopped very small; and as they will be rather shy at first, it will be better to scatter a little of their food on the bottom of the cage, which will induce them to take to it sooner than they would when it is kept in their pan.

When tame, this bird must be managed the same as the sky lark, except that he will want a perch, and will require no turf; instead of which a little red gravel may be scattered over the bottom of his cage; when unwell, the gravel may be changed for ants' mould, with the ants in it, which is the most agreeable live food that you can give him; a few meal worms,

or hog lice, with a little saffron in his water, is also a good thing; if he void loose, chalk, or cheese grated among his meat is the best remedy: by way of change, a little lean butcher's meat minced very fine may occasionally be given him.



## THE TIT LARK

Is smaller than the wood lark, being only five inches and a half in length, and in the colour and disposition of its plumage bears a strong resemblance to the sky lark : in old birds the cock is known from the hen by being yellower all over, but more especially under the throat, on the breast, legs, and soles of the feet ; the young birds cannot be distinguished as to their sex till the cocks begin to record.

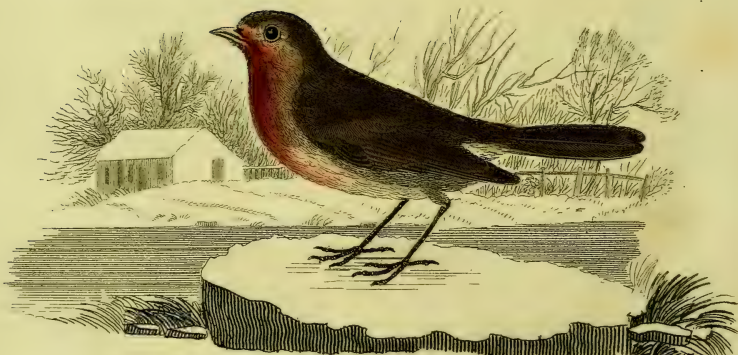
The tit lark is common in this country, where (though it sometimes perches on trees) it is generally found in low marshy meadows, building its nest of withered grass on the ground, and laying five or six eggs, speckled all over with a multitude of brown spots : they are taken either with clap nets or lime twigs, as they catch linnets, &c. or with hair nooses, as they take sky larks.

The tit lark is managed in every respect the same as the sky lark and wood lark.





NIGHTINGALE.



*Drawn & Engraved by Newton Felling.*

REDBREAST.

## THE NIGHTINGALE.

THIS bird, so long, so justly, and so universally celebrated for the superior melody of its notes, which surpass those of every other bird, visits this country in the beginning of May (if the weather be favourable sometimes sooner), and after staying the Summer, takes its departure in August, or early in September, for a warmer climate, though the place of its Winter residence is not yet known with certainty.

In shape the nightingale is somewhat slender; it is in length about six inches and a half; its plumage is of a rusty brown, tinged with olive above, and of a pale ash colour underneath, being nearly the same in male and female; in size, however, the latter exceeds the former. When young, the cock may be distinguished from the hen by their getting upon the perch when they have done eating, and beginning to

record their notes, which the hens do but little, or not at all.

The female builds her nest in the bottom of a thick bush, or close set hedge, a little above the edge of the bank, and most commonly in those hedges where briars and thorns are pretty numerous: the nest itself is composed of dry grass, leaves, moss, intermixed with small fibres, and lined with hair and down; the eggs, which are four or five in number, are of a pale nutmeg brown, and the first young ones (for they have two, and sometimes three broods in a year) are hatched about the middle of May; the second brood is hatched about the middle of July.

The nightingale is seldom observed to sing near its nest, but generally at a stone's throw distant, frequenting cool and shady places, where there are little rivulets of water, and where the trees are low and thick, as the oak is the only high tree in which it delights.

In order to find the nightingale's nest, take notice where the cock sings, and if you find that he sings long in one place,



you may be sure that the hen is not far off; if they have young ones he will now and then be missing, and the hen when you are near her nest, will *sweet* and *cur*; if after long search you cannot find it, stick two or three meal worms on the thorns near to where you find the cock most frequent, and then stand still or lie down, but in such a position that you may have a full view of the worms, when you will presently see him come and fetch them away: take notice which way he carries them, and then listen, when you will hear the young ones making a chirping noise whilst the old ones are feeding them. If the young ones be not sufficiently fledged, do not touch them, as the old ones will entice them away if they find that they have been meddled with.

Branchers are taken in July, or the beginning of August, and old nightingales in the latter end of March, or the beginning of April: the old birds which are taken before the twelfth of April are reckoned the best, as after that time they begin to pair, and those birds that are taken after they have

paired seldom come to any thing, it being very difficult to preserve them.

When you have found the bird's haunts, you may easily take him with a trap cage, baited with a meal worm ; place the trap as near to where the bird sings as you possibly can, and if it be in the middle of a hedge, or near some place where he feeds, turn up the earth before you fix the trap about twice the bigness of the trap itself, as they are known to search for food in places where the ground is newly turned up : should they not come soon, turn up a fresh spot of earth as big again as the former, and you will presently have them, as they never leave a spot to which they usually resort, it being the custom of this bird to take possession on his arrival in this country, of one spot, which he never quits till his departure, and into the precincts of which he never admits any other nightingale but his mate.

These birds are taken likewise with lime-twigs, by placing them in the hedges near where they sing, with meal worms fastened

to them, in order to allure them to the snare: some, however, consider the nightingale trap the best for taking them, and “ which is made of a circular hollowed piece of wood, about a foot in diameter, with a circular wire the size of the trap, to which is attached a green silk net; there is also a watch spring, a string to hold up the trap, and a little cork: it must be baited with meal worms, which, when the bird seizes, the net falls down and secures him. The earth round this must likewise be turned up, and the trap placed as near their haunts as possible.”

## ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE YOUNG BIRDS.

YOUNG Nightingales ought not to be taken from the nest till they are nearly as well fledged as the old ones; and though when they are so old they are apt to be sullen and refuse their meat, yet by opening their bills, and giving them a few small pieces, they will soon come to and feed themselves: when these birds are taken too

young they are very subject to the cramp and looseness, which makes their feathers mat together, and, at length, kills them.

When you take the young birds, they must be kept in their nest, which ought to be put into a small wicker basket, covered over to keep them warm, as they are very susceptible of cold. They should be fed every two hours with sheep's heart, or any other lean meat, chopped very fine, and mixed with hard boiled eggs, taking great care that there are no strings or sinews, which are apt to twine round their tongues or stick in their throats, and thereby occasion them to fall off from their meat.

In a few days they will take their meat off the stick themselves, when they must be put into a nightingale's back cage, with a little straw or dry moss in the bottom, till such time as they take the perch; the moss must then be changed for ants' mould, which ought to be renewed every day.

ON THE TREATMENT OF  
BRANCHERS.

WHEN you have taken a brancher, tie the tips of his wings with a piece of thread, but not too tight, in order to prevent his hurting himself by beating against the sides of the cage, and put him into a nightingale's back cage, and if an open one, darken one side of it with cloth or paper, and hang it for some time at first, in a retired quiet situation, where he may rest undisturbed, by which means he will sooner become tame. In about two hours after he is taken you may offer him food, and as it is likely that he will be sullen and refuse to eat, you must open his bill gently with a thin stick, and give him two or three pieces of nightingale's food, about the size of a pea, mingling with it at first a few ants, or meal worms, to render the taste more agreeable; this ought to be repeated every two hours during the day time, till he is tame enough to feed himself, when the wings may be untied.



In order to make him take to the nightingale's food freely, he ought, from the day he is first caged, to have a quantity of meal worms, or ants, mingled with a small quantity of the chopped meat and egg, and put in a small pot in the bottom of his cage, so that in picking out the worms, he may also take up some of the meat which will stick to them, and thereby get reconciled to the taste: according as you find him take to it readily, the proportion of meat ought to be increased, and the number of the worms diminished, till at length the food consists of nothing but the chopped meat and egg. Should he at any time seem to loathe his food, a spider, a meal worm or two, or a few ants, are the best things you can give him, as it is certain to restore his appetite: those birds generally prove the best which take to their food readily and begin to sing in a few days after they are taken.

Branchers ought to have their vents cleared from feathers, either by pulling them out, or by cutting them off, as they are

apt to get clogged up, which will occasion their death.

The cause of most diseases, not only in nightingales, but also in all other singing birds, is want of cleanliness; as the dirt at the bottom of the cage clogs their feet, and frequently occasions their claws to rot off, bringing on the gout and cramp, and causing them to take no pleasure in themselves; no birds can be kept too clean and neat, for which reason their food and water ought to be renewed every day, and the gravel changed at least twice a week.

In Autumn, nightingales grow so fat, that they will hardly touch their food for a fortnight or three weeks together; at such times they must have a few meal worms, the worms out of pigeon houses, or two or three spiders given to them three times a week, by which they will be cleansed and purged: as their fat goes off, they must be kept warm, and a little saffron put in their water. When they are very lean and poor, give them chopped figs mixed with their meat, continuing it no longer than till they have recovered their flesh. When nightin-

gales have been kept in cages for two or three years, they are extremely subject to the gout, for which the best remedy is, to rub their feet with fresh butter; this may also be used for those breakings out about the eyes and bill with which they are sometimes affected.

When you find them grow melancholy, a little white sugar candy put into their water will often have the effect of restoring their spirits: should this, however, be of no service, a few meal worms given every day with ants, ants' eggs, and ants' mould, strewed at the bottom of the cage, seldom fails to have the desired effect: a new laid egg boiled hard, and chopped small, mingled with the ants, together with a little saffron in their water, is also considered a good thing.

Nightingales are often in danger of being choked, through not taking sufficient care in mincing their meat, to free it from sinews and strings, which hanging in their throats, or twisting about their tongues, causes them to neglect their food. When you perceive a bird troubled in this way, which is easily

known by his gaping, as if making an effort to vomit, and by his panting for breath, take him quietly out of the cage, open his bill with a thin flat stick or a quill, and take away any thing which may hang about his tongue or throat; when this is done, give him a little white sugar candy in his water, and he will soon be well again.

## THE REDBREAST.

THE plaintive melody of its song, the familiar boldness of its disposition, and the extreme confidence which it seems to place in the human race, has long rendered this bird an universal favorite, not only in Great Britain, but also in every other country in Europe, insomuch that it is generally known by some familiar name: thus, in Norway, it is called Peter Ronsmad; in Sweden, Tomi Liden; in Germany, Thomas Gierdit; and with us, Robin Redbreast.

In its plumage, the redbreast is rather sober than otherwise, the upper part being of brown olive; the eye is full and black; the legs and bill are dusky; the breast and forehead are of a deep orange red, and the belly and vent are of a greyish white: the female may readily be distinguished from the male, by the red being much paler in



the former, and by its not extending so far into the head.

During the Winter season, this bird is a constant visitor at our residences, into which it will frequently enter in search of food ; no sooner, however, does the Spring commence, than it retires to the woods, where it chooses the most lonely places, into the precincts of which it admits no other redbreast, except its mate ; their food, in a state of nature, consists of worms, insects, ants, ants' eggs, &c.

The female generally builds in hedges, or banks under the roots of trees, forming her nest of coarse materials ; the outside being composed of dry moss, grass, twigs, &c. and the inside or lining, of a few horse hairs ; she lays from four to six eggs, of a cream colour, sprinkled all over with reddish yellow spots.

In the beginning of May, the robin has young ones fit to take, which is in ten or twelve days after they are hatched, not older, as they are apt to be sullen if you let them remain in the nest longer than that time. Keep them in a little basket, with some

soft hay at the bottom, and feed them either with the wood lark's or nightingale's meat, giving them but little at a time : when they are full grown, cage them in a cage like the nightingale's or wood lark's, though it should be somewhat closer wired, and let them have some moss at the bottom, managing them every way like the nightingale. A young bird brought up from the nest, may easily be taught to pipe and whistle, though I prefer his own beautiful notes far before any thing which can be taught him.

The disorders to which this bird is subject are the same as those which affect the other soft-billed songsters, and are treated in the same way ; indeed, the management of the nightingale and redbreast are so exactly similar, that I must refer the reader to my account of the former bird for any thing that I may have left unsaid in my account of the latter.

Robins are taken either with lime twigs, clap nets, brick traps, or trap cages.

## THE REDSTART.

LIKE the nightingale, the redstart is a bird of passage, arriving in England about the middle of April, and departing the latter end of September or beginning of October. In its disposition it is remarkably shy and solitary, seeking the deepest recesses of the forest, where, in some old wall, or ruined edifice, it builds its nest of moss, dry grass, &c. and lines it with hair and feathers: in this nest it usually deposits four or five eggs of a pale bluish green, which are hatched in May, and the young ones may be taken when ten days old.

The redstart has also been known to build in the midst of cities, where, however, it generally chooses the most inaccessible places for its residence; it likewise frequents lofty precipices, and, it is said, that if observed whilst building her nest,

she will immediately forsake what she has already done: if her eggs be touched she will also forsake them, and if the young ones be meddled with, she will either leave them to starve, or throw them out of the nest.

In its plumage the cock bird is extremely beautiful, the breast, sides, tail, and rump being of a fine scarlet, inclining to orange, except the two middle feathers of the tail, which are brown; the back of the head, neck, and back, are of a deep lead colour, the belly and forehead are white, and the throat, cheeks, and round the insertion of the bill, are of a jet black. The female may easily be distinguished by its less brilliant colours, and by its entirely wanting the black of the throat and cheeks.

Though much inferior to either the nightingale or robin in its song, it nevertheless possesses a great deal of sweetness, and like the former bird will frequently sing in the night: it will also learn the song of other birds, and for that reason ought always to be placed within hearing of good songsters, such as the robin, nightingale, &c. &c.

When taken old, this bird is of so sullen a disposition that it can seldom be reared, and if ever you should succeed in that point it will be long before he begins to sing. The young bird, as I have before observed, may be taken when ten days old, and must be reared and managed with exactly the same food, and in the same manner as the nightingale and robin.

In its wild state the redstart feeds on worms, insects, the eggs and larvæ of insects, wild berries, &c. and it is said takes its name from the peculiar manner in which it shakes its tail from side to side when it alights.



## THE BLACK CAP

TAKES its name from its having the whole of the crown of its head entirely black, which is not, however, the case with the female, the crown of her head being of a dull rust colour, so that a decided mark distinguishes one sex from the other; the rest of the plumage is extremely unassuming, the neck being of an ash colour, the back and wings of an olive-grey, the throat and breast of a silvery grey, and the belly and vent white, the legs and bill are of a bluish colour.

Like the nightingale, this bird is migratory, coming to England about the middle of April, and retiring again about the middle of September: a few, however, occasionally remain through the Winter. Bewick says, "it frequents gardens, and builds its nest near the ground, commonly among the branches of the wood-

bine ; it is very slightly made, and composed of the dried straw and curled roots of small grass, thinly interwoven with a very few hairs, and bound to the twigs with the cotton of plants : the inside of the nest is deep and round : the eggs commonly five in number, are of a reddish brown, sprinkled or marbled with spots of a much darker colour. During the time of incubation, the male attends the female, and sits by turns ; he likewise procures her food, such as flies, worms, and insects. The black cap sings sweetly, and so like the nightingale, that in Norfolk it is called the mock nightingale."

The young ones, which are hatched in June, and may be taken when ten days old, must be managed in the same way, and fed with the same food as the nightingale and redbreast ; as must also the old birds, both in regard to food, and the treatment of diseases.

## THE WREN.

THIS bird, with the exception of the golden-crested wren, is the smallest of the feathered race that inhabits Great Britain, and when seen creeping about old walls and hedges, bears a greater resemblance to a mouse than a bird, in its actions. The wren is about three inches and a half in length; the bill and legs are of brownish horn colour; the breast is of a dingy white, and the back, wings, belly, and tail are of a clear brown, marked with double narrow wavy lines, alternately of a paler and darker colour.

During the Winter season, the wren is frequently seen in the neighbourhood of farm-yards and out-houses, where it sings its song till late in the evening, and often during a fall of snow. "In the Spring it betakes itself to the woods, where it builds its nest on the ground, or in a low bush,

and sometimes on the turf beneath the trunk of a tree, or in a hole in a wall: its nest is constructed with much art, being of an oval shape, with one small aperture at the side for an entrance; it is composed chiefly of moss, or other surrounding materials, so as not to be easily distinguished from them, and lined within with feathers: the female lays from ten to sixteen, and sometimes eighteen eggs: they are white, thinly sprinkled with small reddish spots, mostly at the thicker end."

The young birds are hatched in May, but must not be taken till they are well feathered; in the management of them, and the treatment of their diseases, exactly the same course must be pursued as that recommended for the nightingale.

It is rather difficult to distinguish the cock of this bird from the hen: it may be known, however, by its having a larger eye, and by the waving lines of its plumage, which is altogether more brilliant and more distinct.

## GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.

THIS; and the following bird, like many others which I have described, are so very rarely kept in cages, that I should have passed them unnoticed, had I not observed that they have been written upon in other works of this kind: I shall therefore give a short description of them, as they are ranked among the British song birds.

The golden-crested wren is supposed to be the smallest of all the European birds, being not quite three inches and a half in length; its plumage is of a yellowish olive green on the back and tail; the wings are of a dusky brown; and the under parts of the body are of a pale reddish white, tinged with green: but the mark which distinguishes it from all other birds, and from which it takes its name, is the crown of its head, where the feathers are longer than on the other parts, so as to form a crest of a bright golden yellow, bordered on each side



with black, which forms an arch above its eyes. The crest of the female is less, and of a paler yellow.

Montague says, that "the nest is not made with an opening on one side, as described by some, but is in form and elegance like that of the chaffinch, composed of green moss, woven with wool, and *invariably* lined with feathers, with which it is so well bedded as to conceal the eggs." This account is corroborated in a late Treatise on Singing Birds, in which the above passage is also quoted; Bewick, however, gives a different account: the female lays from seven to twelve eggs, of a dull reddish white, sprinkled with brown.

The golden-crested wren delights principally in the largest trees, where it feeds on the small insects which harbour in the bark, and in search of which it runs about the branches very much after the manner of the tit mouse.

## THE WILLOW WREN

IN plumage bears a strong resemblance to the hen blackcap, and like that bird is very frequently seen in hedges, orchards, shrubberies, &c. where it feeds on insects, and where it may be observed continually running up and down the branches in search of its prey: its notes are said to be "somewhat like those of the redbreast, but not so loud or so mellow, though wildly sweet, and very plaintive."

The female builds on the ground, in sequestered situations; and the nest, which is composed of dried grass and moss, lined with hair and feathers, is generally so artfully concealed, that it is very difficult to find; the eggs (usually six in number) are white, spotted with red.

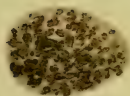
The willow wren is a bird of passage, appearing in this country in April, and departing from hence in August: it sings immediately on its arrival

“ If reared for the cage, and this species is really worthy the attention of amateurs, they are fed and managed as the redbreast and other soft-billed birds.” The golden-crested wren must also be reared in the same manner.

## THE EGGS.

IN order to afford assistance in distinguishing the eggs of birds, to those fanciers who, residing in the country may have an opportunity of rearing birds from the nest, I have given correct representations of thirteen different species, which were engraved, after drawings made expressly for this work, from the eggs themselves, in the possession of Mr. Yarrel, who kindly permitted the artist to make sketches of them.

FINIS.



*Redbreast.*



*Wren.*



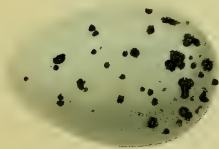
*Starling.*



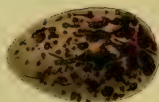
*Nightingale.*



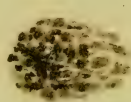
*Redstart.*



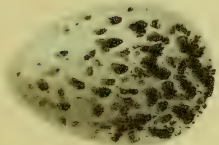
*Thrush.*



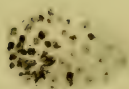
*Wood-lark.*



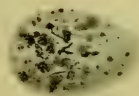
*Blackcap.*



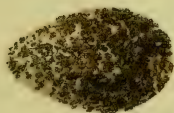
*Blackbird.*



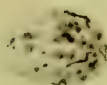
*Linnet.*



*Bull-finch.*



*Sky-lark.*



*Gold-finch.*









November, 1822.

# BOOKS

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Clandestine Marriage	45	Jealous Wife	40	She Stoops to Conquer	18
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Conscious Lovers	75	Lionel and Clarissa	19	would not	61
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*Count of Narbonne	58	Love in a Village	9	Suspicious Husband	52
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Critic	14	Mahomet	66	Tancred and Sigis-	
*Cymon	77	Maid of the Mill	32	munda	44
*Devil to Pay	62	*Maid of the Oaks	95	*Tender Husband	103
Distress Mother	82	Man of the World	15	*Three Weeks after	
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Double Gallant	85	Merchant of Bruges	105	*Tobacconist	49
Douglas	13	*Midas	20	Trip to Scarborough	55
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Edward the Black		Mourning Bride	39	*Virgin Unmasked	88
Prince	98	My Spouse and I	106	Way of the World	96
Every Man in his Hu-		New Way to pay Old		Way to keep Him	43
mour	70	Debts	68	What Next?	76
Fair Penitent	34	Oroonoko	50	Which is the Man?	89
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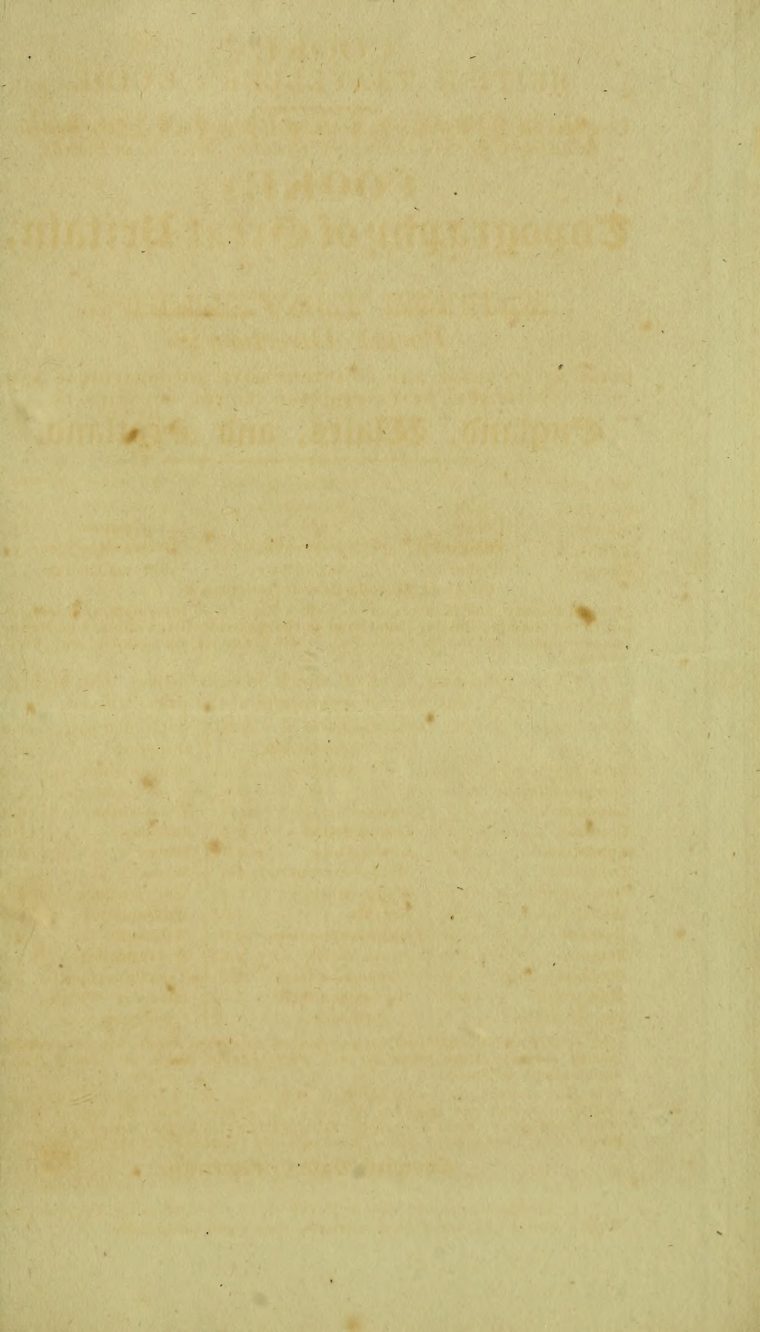
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